

THE ROLE OF SPOUSES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

by

Sanjay H. Inamdar

Submitted to the MIT Sloan School of Management
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY

at the

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June 2005

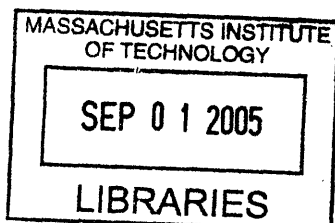
© Sanjay H. Inamdar 2005. All rights reserved.

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part.

Signature of Author: _____
MIT Sloan School of Management
May 6, 2005

Certified by: _____
John Van Maanen
Erwin H. Schell Professor of Organizational Studies
Thesis Advisor

Accepted by: _____
Stephen J. Sacca
Director, MIT Sloan Fellows Program in Innovation and Global Leadership



ARCHIVES

THE ROLE OF SPOUSES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

by

SANJAY H. INAMDAR

Submitted to the MIT Sloan School of Management on May 6, 2005
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Management of Technology

ABSTRACT

The atmosphere of the entrepreneurial world emphasizes the need for unlimited time and extensive effort on part of the entrepreneur to creatively build an organization. As a result, the amount of time an entrepreneur can spend with his or her spouse and family is substantially reduced. In unknown number of cases, the entrepreneur may find a need for advice, support, and help from the spouse while journeying along this new path.

This journey can have a two-fold impact on the spouses. The spouses of entrepreneurs may be themselves in need of attention, time, and guidance from the other spouse in family matters and meeting the needs of growing children. However, many spouses find themselves in a situation where they cannot expect much help from the entrepreneur; on the contrary, they may well be challenged by the demands of the entrepreneur and the business.

Added to this situation, many spouses may hope to pursue their own interests and/or careers. They may have friendships and personal interests, they may wish to maintain and may have extended family obligations too. Owing to their partner's entrepreneurial efforts, the spouses own outside interests may make further demands on the spouse's time. All this could amount to spinning multiple dishes like a juggler.

This thesis explores the role of spouses in entrepreneurship. I reviewed literature, conducted interviews, and made use of my own experiences to form the basis of the study. The research focuses on three issues. First, I reviewed the literature, such as it is, which led me to question why there is so little work on the role of spouses in entrepreneurship. Second, the role of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship is examined from the perspective of the social requirements for pursuing this path. Third, through extensive interviews, I examined the role of spouses in entrepreneurship, and the role of spouses from the viewpoint of the entrepreneurs themselves.

Thesis Advisor: John Van Maanen
Title: Erwin H. Schell Professor of Organizational Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	5
Chapter 2 A Review of the Literature	9
Chapter 3 Research Methodology	22
Chapter 4 Interviews with Spouses	29
Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion.....	58
Appendix A Ten books that I selected for literature review	65
Appendix B Interview Questionnaire.....	66
Bibliography	67

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, John Van Maanen, for guiding me through this thesis and giving me the insights and motivation to pursue this difficult subject. John provided me with a framework and ideas to aid in the development of the thesis topic. His method of handling complex subjects and his deep thinking instantly energized me, and during crucial times in the thesis writing, I was given the freedom to stop by his office and get myself re-energized. He always greeted me with a smile and handled every issue so articulately that my answers always emerged, smoothly and subtly. Thanks John!

I would like to thank Stephen Sacca for his support and guidance during the Sloan Fellows Program. Although Stephen was not directly involved in this thesis or in teaching, I have learned many things from him in the areas of leadership, innovation, devotion to work and interpersonal skills, and these are just as applicable to the creation of a thesis. Thanks Stephen.

I also thank my father Hemant Inamdar, mother Alaka Inamdar, and brother Girish Inamdar for their blessings and good wishes.

I am most grateful to participant spouses for agreeing to take part in the interviews, for answering my endless questions, for giving their time, and for supporting my research. I greatly appreciate their willingness to express their views freely and to share first-hand experiences on this subject. Because they have shared their personal experiences without reservation, I cannot name them here, but simply stated, this thesis could not have been written without their input.

Finally, and most importantly, I thank my wife Ashwini and son Hemchandra for their love and encouragement to pursue my own entrepreneurship and education. To me Ashwini is an example of integrity and humanity. Her divine qualities, smiling and simple approaches to difficult times and complete faith in herself and me have altered the course of my life.

CHAPTER

1

Introduction

*The deeper we search, the more we find there is to know,
and as long as human life exists I believe that will always be so.*

—Albert Einstein

I have worked in environments where the work never seemed to stop, stretching for 24 hours over two days every week. “This is my life and I am enjoying it,” I used to say. On the surface, I believed it and everyone went along with me. Being an entrepreneur was my pride and entrepreneurship my soul. However, after achieving certain goals in life, both professionally and personally, I look back and realize it was not my life alone. My wife, Ashwini, has been with me all these years, silent but stalwart. The early days were days of testing for both of us, and without Ashwini’s strong support of my entrepreneurial efforts and her willingness to take complete responsibility for raising our son Hemchandra, it would not have been possible for me to achieve my entrepreneurial goals.

The objective of my research is to examine the roles spouses have played relative to entrepreneurs. I have made sure neither to empower the role nor to underestimate it. This study is an attempt, from a third-party researcher’s viewpoint, to know what that role is.

Nine out of ten small business owners, according to a recent Canadian study (See below); agree that independence and control over their decisions are two of the most rewarding aspects of being an entrepreneur. These were also the key benefits of entrepreneurship identified by business owners across all sectors and sizes of firms in a

recent study¹ released by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) in September 2004. Catherine Swift, president and CEO of CFIB said:

Even though 92 percent of entrepreneurs also find running a business stressful, the benefits of being their own boss still measures very high. In addition to dealing with the work/family balance issues of their employees, the study also found that small business owners have significant issues of their own. Fewer than one-in-five (17 percent) business owners work 40 or fewer hours per week. About two-thirds (58 percent) of SME owners work between 41 and 59 hours a week; while one-quarter work 60 hours or more per week. The self-employed with no employees are more likely to be at both ends of the scale: to work fewer than 39 hours, or to put in over 60 hours per week. Operating your own business requires a serious and sustained amount of time and effort. However, in spite of the long hours and the reduction in the amount of personal time, entrepreneurs value their ability to decide their own futures and take great pride in the ownership of their businesses. (p.1)

Why this topic?

It was apparent to me that there is a need for additional research and analysis on the subject I have selected: the role of spouses in entrepreneurship.

Often, entrepreneurs are job creators; if not, they are at least self-employed. Many entrepreneurs are substantial wealth creators and service providers. During their careers, entrepreneurs come across opportunities to express their experiences through interviews, books, media, and other formal and informal platforms. However, seldom have we heard about the role of their spouses who may also have major involvement in the entrepreneurial activity, either directly or indirectly, and for building the entrepreneurial organization itself.

If, for the sake of argument, we consider that spouses have no active role, at the very least there is probably some sacrifice of time shared with the entrepreneur—certainly in the initial days. This is likely to be true for many other working professions as well as for those

¹ The Work and Family survey was conducted by CFIB between December 2003 and February 2004, and drew 10,699 responses. The results are accurate to within +/- 0.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

in the civil and military services and the spouse of the person working in such areas may also have contributions to make. There also may be entrepreneurs without spouses, or those who have succeeded on their own or with some other person as a mentor. As my experience is in the area of entrepreneurship, I feel I am well-positioned to study the spouse's role in entrepreneurship. Thus I have selected this area from a vast area of many professions.

Why the Topic is Important

Information on the role of spouses in entrepreneurship is important because it enables people to understand the needs and roles of entrepreneurs from the perspective of their spouses, in order to assess whether and how these needs and roles are met. The topic pulls together resources for finding information on other people's experiences, and provides an opportunity to learn from them. Finally, this research is a beginning and will perhaps motivate other researchers to delve further into this subject.

Questions for Which I Seek Answers

- What were the backgrounds of the spouses prior marriage?
- Did the spouses have role models during youth?
- What kind of academic and social learning did they receive in their youth?
- What is the general response of spouses to the entrepreneurial venture?
- Did they participate in the building of an enterprise?
- How were home responsibilities handled, especially bringing up children?
- Did entrepreneurs discuss business issues with spouses and did the spouses, for their perspective, contribute?

- What are spouses' attitudes toward "social responsibility"?
- What is the message for the spouses of future entrepreneurs?

CHAPTER 2

A Review of the Literature

*Determine the things that can and shall be done,
and then we will find a way.*

--Abraham Lincoln

Entrepreneurs are part of the fabric of today's society, and the spouses of entrepreneurs have a role in entrepreneurship just as spouses do in other areas of society. I reviewed the literature on entrepreneurship to determine what information might be available on the subject of spouses of entrepreneurs. What I found was that, to date, very little research has been done on the experiences and contributions of spouses. In the instances where there was recognition, it was done in a general way, typically looking at the spouse simply as a family member of the entrepreneur.

Thus, my purpose in this chapter is to identify and discuss studies I found in the literature and examine the extent to which these entrepreneurial studies have dealt with the spouses and/or family of entrepreneurs.

2.1 Literature on 'entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship'

A book edited by Richard Swedberg (2000), "*Entrepreneurship, a Social Science Review*," includes the writings of several eminent researchers who covered various facets of entrepreneurship. Perhaps the most prominent of the writers in this collection is,

Joseph Schumpeter (2000) who notes:

Because being an entrepreneur is not a profession and as a rule a lasting condition, entrepreneurs do not form a social class in the technical sense, as, for example, landowners or capitalists or workmen do. Of course the entrepreneurial function will lead to certain class positions for the successful entrepreneurs and his family. (p. 60)

Schumpeter linked the family of an entrepreneur directly to the entrepreneur's social class position, which implies that the spouse or other family members do not have their own professional standing in society. Similarly, the author assumed that the husband is the entrepreneur and that he is the head of his family.

Howard Aldrich (2000) wrote about entrepreneurial strategies and the problems faced by entrepreneurs. In concluding his article, he observes:

Thus, even though founding a new organization with an unproven form is risky business under any conditions, aspiring entrepreneurs continue to found organizations. The first organization of its kind faces a different set of challenges than one which simply carries on a tradition pioneered by thousands of predecessors in the same industry. (p. 225)

In his article, the author discussed problems and strategies in entrepreneurship; however, there was neither mention of problems that might have faced spouses and/or family members nor any strategies that might have been helpful for addressing such problems.

In the article "*The Entrepreneur and Profit*" by Ludwig von Mises (2000), the author carried his discussion beyond the subject of economic profits. He said:

The business of the entrepreneur is the multitude of technology feasible methods those which are the best fit to supply the public in the cheapest way with the things they are asking for most urgently" (p.91).

This discussion provided by Ludwig von Mises considers the wider dimensions of profit. Society is benefited by introducing a technology to produce goods at cheaper costs which represents a kind of profit to the customer. Similarly, when the spouse or family members

make sacrifices on behalf of the entrepreneur, these are balanced by the returns they derive in the way of social standing or a better lifestyle. This represents a kind of profit to the family of the entrepreneur. Von Mises effectively covers virtually all aspects of profit, including the non-profit conduct of affairs, social functions, and moral aspects. Unfortunately, neither the spouse nor the family of the entrepreneur was ever mentioned.

The Secrets of a Successful Entrepreneur by Eugene Dailey (1993) is a guidebook of 334 pages for entrepreneurs in which the author discusses choosing a venture, developing an action plan, raising money, building staff, marketing, and other related areas. He allots one page each on the topics of “planning retirement” and “managing stress” (pp. 202 and 224). However no mention of spouse or family is made in the text. Dailey allots three pages to summing up the life of an entrepreneur, saying:

Balance your life. All work and no play not only make a dull boy, but it can make him or her lonely in old age. Set aside time for your family and friends. Leading a well rounded life will make you a better person which will make you a better boss. Keep a positive outlook. Your mental frame of mind helps to determine your ultimate success. (p 221)

Always remember the importance of your customers. . . . Decide what you really want and develop a plan that will take you there, don’t try to do everything yourself, remember that your employees are your most important asset, watch the bottom line, listen to your customers, and take advantage of opportunities. I wish you best of luck. (p. 233)

Dailey suggests ten points that he says should be typed and hung on the wall. However, among the ten points—for that matter, throughout an entire book devoted to the “secrets of a successful entrepreneur”—the importance of the role of spouse in entrepreneurship is completely neglected. In an entire book on the secrets of

entrepreneurship, Dailey takes only one line to mention family, and that too in combination with friends, and no mention of spouses at all. The line is:

Set aside time for your family and friends (p.221).

The author's mention of family and friends in fact discussed what I would consider a selfish motive: making suitable arrangements so one is not left alone in later life. It does not say, or even imply, that the entrepreneur owes time to his/her family and friends because they are an important part of his/her life and may have been quite supportive.

In *Beyond Entrepreneurship*, by James C. Collins and William C. Lazier (1992) discuss how to build a "great company" from an entrepreneurial venture. The authors mention "extraordinary human effort", "the benefits of vision", "effective strategies", "innovation" and "tactical excellence". They note the importance of people in building great companies and developing a close-knit "family feeling". They say:

There is nothing inconsistent between having a close-knit family feeling and weeding out poor performers. We go to great lengths to build a family environment around here. . . . (p. 217)

Therein lays the secret, if there is one. Great companies are built on a foundation of respect. They respect their customers, they respect themselves, and they respect their relationships. Most important they respect their people-people at all levels, and from all backgrounds. (p 220)

By default, the family environment was considered apparently to be ideal. Mention of people was related to all levels of the work and not to family. Respect for a spouse or family members was not touched on. There was no mention of the role of spouses and families in building a company, even when the authors talked about "personal touch, values, or vision".

In “*Collective Entrepreneurship in a Globalizing Economy*,” Panos Mourdoukoutas (1999) discusses various facets of entrepreneurship and new ways of looking at them. He suggests models for collective entrepreneurship, including entrepreneur networks. However, again, no mention of spouses and their role is anywhere in the book.

Lessons from the Edge, written by Jana Matthews and Jeff Dennis (2003) handled the subject of entrepreneurship in a novel way. Taking real life examples, the authors considered entrepreneurship from various angles including leadership, people, partnerships, money, and personal issues. In cases on personal issues, there are a few mentions of spouse and family. In the case of one entrepreneur who started a chain of restaurants, it was noted that his business left him with less and less time for his wife and children. He found it was a high price to pay. The entrepreneur said:

I was once married to a New Zealander named Lisa. We have two kids, two boys. Lisa was a fashion designer. . . . That broke up my marriage, Lisa and I split up. . . . Eventually I realized that I needed to start hanging out with people who run their lives in a more disciplined way, people with families, with successful businesses, I am a new man now. (p. 226)

Another entrepreneur said:

Fortunately my family was tremendously supportive. My loving wife listened a lot and was very brave in those days of uncertainty. And my Mom and Dad were very supportive. In fact, I’ll never forget when I called my father to tell him what had happened: “Dad, you’re not going to believe this, but I have just been fired.” Without missing a beat, he said, “Great. When are we going to go into business?” Today he is 50/50 partner into business, he put up the money. (p. 230).

Matthews and Dennis wrote suggest ten lessons and they give top priority to personal relationship. They say: “Don’t take relationships for granted. Value your family and friends

as much as your business. Understand that your family may not have the same goals as you.”(p. 251)

In his book *Entrepreneurs in High Technology: Lessons from MIT and Beyond*, Ed Roberts (1991) remarks:

The most striking influence on technical entrepreneurs is family background: between half and two-thirds have a self-employed father. (Page 21)

Although there is no specific mention of the role of a spouse in entrepreneurship, the mention of family background as helping a person to become an entrepreneur implies that the opinions of family members are not irrelevant.

2.2 Summary

Of the ten books on entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, I selected in a literature sample drawn from books published between 1980 and 2003. I found that of the ten books, not one devoted a full chapter to the role of spouses in entrepreneurship. Six books discussed family relations and spouses, but the content relating to spouses was always less than a full page; in many cases just a single line. (See Appendix A)

The authors studied entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship from the perspective of developing entrepreneurship with various skills, including people skills. The books also covered entrepreneurship as an innovation or entrepreneurship as it relates to developing management skills, market research, employee morale issues. There was, as noted, little or no coverage of the spouse's role in entrepreneurship or in the life of an entrepreneur.

2.3 Book on ‘interviews of entrepreneurs’

I wanted to check on how entrepreneurs perceive the role of spouses. I found the book, *The Entrepreneurial Connection* by Gurmeet Naroola (2001) which features interviews of entrepreneurs. I studied the book to glean what entrepreneurs say about their spouses and family members. In this chapter I present my extrapolated opinions from the interviews published in this book. In my opinion, studying the issues I am researching from the entrepreneur’s point of view is helpful in the overall development of this thesis research topic. Most of the interviews are with entrepreneurs of Indian origin, but the fact that they have been successful in the U.S. makes their opinions useful in the context of both the Indian and U.S. business environments.

Arun Netravali

The ninth president of Bell Labs, Netravali was also Lucent’s chief technology officer and chief network architect during his tenure. He continues to work with the academic and investment communities and acts as an advisor to Lucent’s senior management on technical and customer issues. Dr. Netravali is regarded as a pioneer in the field of digital technology. He commented: “*My family has played a very dominant role in influencing my life. My parents have been a great source of inspiration. . . . My mother was a housewife, so she was there for me all the time. She was a guiding light.*” (p. 24)

Romesh Wadhvani

Dr. Romesh is founder and former chairman of Aspect Development, Inc, vice-chairman of i2 Technologies and a member of i2 board of directors. Dr. Wadhvani holds an M.S. and PhD from Carnegie Mellon University. He said:

My family has provided extraordinary support in terms of putting up with the fact that I spend most of my waking hours on my business rather than with them. . . . My wife Kathy's values and honesty, her kindness and focus on the family in terms of communications and relationships, have been instrumental in my success. (p. 79)

Vinod Dham

Popularly known as the “father of the Pentium chip,” at Intel, Dham led the development of this chip that is so ubiquitous in today's computers. He also played a powerful role in the development of the highly visible K6 processor. He said, “*My wife has been very useful in giving objective advice. As a CEO, everybody you turn to has a special agenda; who do you use as your sounding board? It is indeed true that it is often lonely at the top and sometimes the only person I can trust is my wife.* (p. 160)

Desh Deshpande

Co-founder and chairman of Sycamore, Deshpande's vision for Sycamore was to create next-generation optical networking technology. Desh has garnered many top industry honors, among them, being named one of 1999's top entrepreneurs. He said:

I think it's the relationships that I have. Sometimes people build businesses but they build them at the cost of a lot of other things. Fortunately for me, I haven't run the business at the expense of all these relationships. I enjoy colleagues, my family and my friends...My wife and I, in our own humble way, have started a

program with IIT Madras and it seems to be coming along. We have indicated that we will give them five million dollars a year for twenty years. (p. 180)

Jayshree Ullal

Ullal is vice president and general manager at CISCO Systems. Under the leadership of CISCO CEO John Chambers, she has grown the LAN switching business from zero to \$7 billion. She has made many successful acquisitions for CISCO. She said:

I was greatly influenced by my grandfather . . . and of course by my parents and husband as well. . . . I have begun to realize that in the corporate world we are so focused and driven that we lose sight of other important dimensions. I wanted to take a break before my kids grew up and went off to college. (p. 204)

Krish Prabhu

Prabhu is CEO of Alcatel Telcom. Before Alcatel he was with AT&T as a senior member of technical staff. Dr. Prabhu holds an M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. He said:

We were a solid middle-class family. It was a very happy childhood and both my parents put family ahead of everything else. I think the support from family is invaluable. Support like that is very very important because it is not guarded or reserved; it is unconditional. My wife has been very supportive of my career and she has supported me 100% in terms of what I have done up to this point. (p. 219)

Rajat Gupta

He is the former Managing Director of the world's largest leading management consultancy, McKinsey & Company. He has an MBA from Harvard University. He said:

During my early years, my parents were a very important influence. . . . My wife has also been a huge influence on my life. I have been married for 27 years. She has influenced me more than anybody else in terms of our way of thinking and philosophy. She is also very simple and compassionate as a person. I have learnt very important values from her, things like caring for people. She suffers when others suffer; she suffers on their behalf. She is an extraordinary caring person. (p. 230)

Raj Singh

Raj is president of Comstellar Technologies and a partner in Redwood Venture Partners. He started a company developing chip design software. Then he founded three more companies. Two companies, Cerent and StratumOne, were sold to CISCO for over \$4 billion. He said:

The legacy my father left me was the importance of values. . . . My parents inspired me to use the values of integrity and humanity in conjunction with ambition in all aspects of personal and business dealings. My wife and children have been very supportive in my quest to grow Wipro. (*p. 253*)

2.4 Summary

Interviews of these leading entrepreneurs suggest that they consider the role of spouses and family members of importance in entrepreneurship as well as in personal lives of the entrepreneurs. As seen here, they seem to have appreciation for spouse and family members. The sample here suggests that support of parents, perhaps before marriage, and support of spouse after marriage, seems to be a source of constant inspiration to the entrepreneur and the entrepreneurs seem to imply here that they attach foremost importance to the support from their family members.

2.5 University Programs

After reviewing the literature as 2.1 and 2.2 above, I was curious to learn as to whether and how management programs, especially those designed for entrepreneurs, have covered the family of entrepreneur in their curriculum. I looked at MBA programs in fifty

universities, specifically at the curriculums and degree requirements. A cross-section of my selections for this research is shown in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 selected universities with MBA programs

	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>UK/Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>
Top Schools	10	4	4
Well-Known Schools	10	3	3
Lesser-Known Schools	10	3	3

Source: Author, 2005

In selecting these schools, I chose those that offered MBA programs specifically devoted to entrepreneurship (i.e., MBA entrepreneurship programs) or ones having entrepreneurship as a subject prominently covered in their studies. My goal was to identify how many offered at least one semester-length credit course, even as an elective, devoted to some aspect of investigating the “role of spouses in entrepreneurship,” or “how to balance work/family environments.

My research found that this important aspect of entrepreneurship is completely neglected by MBA programs. Among the fifty schools I researched, I did not find a single school that offered a semester-length credit course for students on this subject.

Then I researched the executive development programs of renowned U.S. business schools: MIT Sloan School of Management, Graduate School of Business at Harvard, Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon, Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia, Graduate School of Business at Stanford, and Graduate School of Business at

Wharton. Among these six schools, I have been a student at two: MIT Sloan and Carnegie Mellon. I have visited three others: HBS, Stanford and Wharton.

The programs at these schools include activities for the spouses of participants. However, there is neither a specific course on the role of spouses in entrepreneurship, nor any topic on that subject within any courses, as far as I could determine. For example, one Harvard executive program, called “Choices—the Next Chapter of Success,” does offer opportunities for entrepreneurs to examine personal and business successes. The course aims to enable participants to envision their own integrated model of the “good life,” then align business, family, and personal goals around multi-dimensional satisfaction in every domain. The program description indicates that partnership involvement —most often spouses—has had a substantial impact on the ability of participants to carry out their goals. There is not mention found on the details of participation of the partners/spouses. Similarly MIT-Sloan has a full semester length credit course, “Choice-Points”, that encourages spouses of a degree program to attend the course. The course is about leadership and decisions taught through stories, drama and fiction. Carnegie-Mellon’s program for executives also includes participation from partners but in an informal way and not in the classrooms. In the March 14, 2005 issue of ‘Business Week,’ there is an article by Jennifer Merritt – “B-Schools find it pays to make student’s partners-and kids-feel welcome”. In this article, Davis Capodilupo, Executive Director of MIT-Sloan’s MBA program has been quoted saying, “ Family concerns have played greater and greater role in decision making process for applicants in the last few years”(p. 104-105). This indicates the awareness that is taking place at the business schools on this issue.

2.6 Summary

A spouse is usually the closest person in the life of an entrepreneur and he or she is directly affected by the success or failure of the enterprise. A business partner is usually in close contact with the entrepreneur but his or her role in the business is contractual and direct and, in most cases, is seen and acknowledged. A spouse is the life partner of the entrepreneur but frequently remains in the background, unstudied and generally unacknowledged. In general the role of the spouse in entrepreneurship is rarely mentioned in the literature or acknowledged in management programs offered by educational institutions.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

*Wherever you see a successful business,
someone once made a courageous decision.*
—Peter F. Drucker

The research for this thesis is based on the following:

- Twelve interviews with the spouses of entrepreneurs. This included five spouses from the U.S., five from India, and one each from France and Holland. (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2).
- Review of my interactions based on family friendships, over many years, with numerous other entrepreneurs and their spouses who live in other countries such as India, Germany, Holland, UK, France, Ireland, and the U.S.
- My wife's personal experience as the spouse of an entrepreneur..

My interviews with spouses covered a number of fields. I interviewed several spouses whose husbands are owners of small to medium-size businesses; I also interviewed spouses whose husbands own large, multinational businesses doing millions of dollars worth of business. In one interview, the wife was an entrepreneur, and I interviewed her husband in his role as the spouse supporting her in the business enterprise.

Table 3.1 Details of Interviews (a)

Spouse	Gender	Country	Interview	Date	Duration
1.	F	India	P	12.29.04	1.25 hours
2.	M	India	P	1.3 & 1.4.05	0.75&1 hour
3.	F	India	P	1.5.05	0.75 hour
4.	F	India	T	1.9.05	0.50 hour
5.	F	India	P	1.12.05	1.00 hour
6.	F	France	P	1.20.05	0.75 hour
7.	F	Holland	T	2.2.05	0.50 hour
8.	F	USA	E	2.14.05	N/A
9.	F	USA	E	2.16.05	N/A
10.	F	USA	P	2.19&20.05	1&1.5 hours
11.	F	USA	T	3.6.05	0.75 hour
12.	F	USA	E	3.7.05	N/A

F = Female, M = Male, P = Personal interview, T = Telephone interview, E = via E-mail

Some interviews were conducted at the spouse's home and some at the office of the entrepreneur. Two interviews extended over two days, the second part a follow-up interview or a meeting for additional information or to visit a workplace. In some cases, entrepreneurs added information informally during our interview conversations.

Three telephone interviews were conducted by prior appointment. In the beginning of each call, I gave a brief idea of the issues and approximate time envisioned for the interview.

Three spouses provided responses via e-mail. For this, I had prepared a questionnaire containing ten questions (see Appendix B). Of these ten questions, questions six were designed to gain insight into the spouse's experience. Questions 7 to 9 were

designed to provide information about perceptions of the future. Question 10 offered an opportunity for the spouse to provide information beyond that given in questions 1 to 9.

Table 3.2 Details of Interviews (b)

Country	Personal	Telephone	via E-mail	Total
India	4	1	-	5
France	1	-	-	1
Holland	-	1	-	1
USA	1	1	3	5
Total	6	3	3	12

Interview Criteria

Sample Size: I decided that the appropriate number of interviews should be more than 10 but less than 15. This size would provide a range of experiences and do fit the time period available to me for interviewing. Out of the 15, six entrepreneurs as well as their spouses knew me directly. In another set of six, only the entrepreneurs knew me and in remaining 3 cases neither the entrepreneur nor the spouse knew me. In all but one cases (one case where the spouse was the husband) I contacted the entrepreneurs first with a request to consider forwarding my request to the spouse for an interview. I followed up with telephone calls to those I knew and with e-mails to the others. I received replies from all 15 people I had approached. Fourteen were willing to participate in the interviews. One entrepreneur replied to me with a refusal to participate. He wrote, “Sanjay, my wife would prefer not to participate in this survey. I hope you will understand. She wishes to keep her thoughts about this confidential”. Of the 14, 12 interviews were completed. One person was travelling and

could not be interviewed, and one other person was willing but was not available within my interview timeframe. Table 3.3 provides relevant details.

Table 3.3

Number of spouses contacted for interview	15
Number of replies received	15
Number of spouses who agreed to be interviewed	14
Number of spouses who refused to be interviewed	01
Number of spouses who could not be interviewed	02
Total number of spouses interviewed	12

Diversity: I wanted to ensure that the spouses being interviewed would have different cultural, educational, and geographical backgrounds. I traveled to India via France in December and interviewed spouses of entrepreneurs from different regions. The French entrepreneur conducts his business mainly in France; the Dutch entrepreneur does business in many European countries. The Indian entrepreneurs I contacted range from a small fast-food business to a large industrial firm that conducts its business internationally. The U.S. entrepreneurs are from Boston and New York. I also travelled to New York for a personal interview. This cross-section, while making my life busy, ensured variety.

Interviews: Because I sought free and open responses from spouses, I used open-ended questions as the primary means of collecting data. I selected four countries representing 3 regions, Asia, Europe and America as I thought this would reveal commonalities and differences in the spouses' approach to entrepreneurship.

My cross-section of interviews includes a wide range of businesses in terms of size, areas of business, education, and the vision and reach of the entrepreneurs and spouses.

I made it clear upfront to all participants that these were confidential interviews. I assured them that no names would be used in the thesis, and that I expected free and frank answers from them. The participants were cooperative and helped me conduct the interviews in a most informal manner.

I also interviewed my wife to obtain her perceptions and experience as the spouse of an entrepreneur.

Analyzing the Data

I analyzed the data specifically in terms of nine topics I had in mind (see Table 3.4). I looked for commonalities and differences in the views of spouses from different backgrounds. I also analysed the collected data using own experiences helping me decide on catagories.

Table 3.4

Data on	Analysis Points: commonalities, differences, diversities
Background	Before and after marriage
Role Models	During development, from family, friends, teachers, other
Education	Academic, also upbringing values
Culture	Eastern/Western, Family, Personal views
Response	To entrepreneurship and other family demands
Home	Responsibilities, growing children, own interests
Advice	From other entrepreneurs, guidance, involvement
Social	Views on social matters and responsibilities
Guidance	Advice for future generation

Information on the three types of interviews (Personal, Telephonic, E-Mail) is illustrated in the following tables (see Tables 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7) From this summary we know some personal information as well as information on the size of businesses of my samples.

Summary of Interviews

Table 3.5 Personal interviews

Interview	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Spouse	F/India	M/India	F/India	F/India	F/France	F/USA
Date/Hours	12.29/1.25	1.3/0.75	1.5/0.75	1.12/1.00	1.20/0.75	2.19/1.00
2nd interview	-	1.4/1.00	-	-	-	2.20/1.5
Venue	Home	Home/Off	Home	Home	Hotel	Office/dinner
Education	M.A.	Drop-out	MBA	B.A.	B.S.	M.A.
Children	1/D	2/D	1/S	2/S 1/D	4/S 2/D	1/S 2/D
Business	L-D-B	Sm-SG	M-FG	L-SS	M-FG	L-FG
Int.Exposure	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

F=Female, M=Male, D=Daughter, S=Son, L=Large, M=Medium, Sm=Small, D=Difficulty, B=Bankruptcy, SG=Slow growing, FG=Fast growing, SS=Slow steady.

Table 3.6 Telephone Interviews

Interview	#7	#8	#9
Spouse	F/India	F/Holland	F/USA
Date/Hours	1.9/0.50	2.2/0.50	3.6/0.75
2nd interview	-	*	*
Venue	From home	From home	From home
Education	College degree	M.S.	Doctor-Surgeon
Children	Yes	Yes	Yes
Business	L-FG	M-FG	L-FG
Intl.Exposure	Yes	Yes	Yes

* = These two spouses offered to talk again if needed and made it clear to me to feel free to contact them with any further questions, if necessary. However, since the first interviews were complete in my opinion, I did not go for a second round of discussions.

Table 3.7 E-mail Interviews

Interview	#10	#11	#12
Spouse	F/USA	F/USA	F/USA
Date/Hours	2.14/N.A.	2.16/N.A.	3.7/N.A.
2nd interview	*	*	*
Venue	From home	From home	From home
Education	Engineer, Masters	Engineer, Masters	Not asked
Children	Yes	Yes	Yes
Business	Large	Large	Large
Intl.Exposure	Yes	Yes	Yes

* The information in the first response was complete in my opinion, so follow-up interviews were not conducted. However, all the three spouses were friendly and helpful in their correspondence and I believe they would have addressed more questions if contacted.

CHAPTER

4

Interviews with Spouses

I think I've been asked to do something about everything in the world except change the weather.
—Eleanor Roosevelt, 1939

In this chapter I report what I learned from my interviews. I have made every effort to be precise. However, since the interviews were not tape-recorded, I have tried to accurately convey the meaning although the words may not be exactly what were spoken. The results are therefore dependent on my listening ability and memory.

Interview areas:

- What was the background of each spouse prior marriage?
- Did the spouse have a role model(s) during youth?
- What kind of academic and social learning did the spouse receive while growing up?
- What is each spouse's general response to the entrepreneurial venture?
- Could the spouse participate in building an enterprise?
- How were home responsibilities handled, especially bringing up children?
- Did the entrepreneur discuss business issues with the spouse? Could the spouse contribute?
- What are each spouse's attitudes about social responsibility?
- Does each spouse have advice or a message for the spouses of future entrepreneurs?

Introducing the Spouses

In describing the backgrounds of the spouses my goal is to give the reader a fair idea about the spouse and his/her role vis-à-vis the entrepreneur, their family, and friends. The names used here are pseudonyms.

Spouses from India

1) Prior to marriage, **“Sarita”** lived with her family in Mumbai. She has a Masters in English Literature and had originally hoped to obtain a Ph.D. and become a professor in Mumbai. She has been married for 50+ years to an entrepreneur. Originally he served as a chief engineer for a multinational company, but left to start his own business, which grew rapidly. Owner of several companies that manufactured large processing plants on a turnkey basis, he later faced difficult times because of hostile labor unions. A man of principle, he was unwilling to surrender to the demands of the union leaders, which resulted in the closure of his factories, sporadic violence, and eventually litigation and bankruptcy. Sarita has stayed the course through the good and bad times.

2) **“Varun”** is from the city of Pune, and comes from a family devoted to social work. His wife **“Suman”** is an entrepreneur. She grew up near Pune and was educated in a residential girls’ school. Varun’s mother also worked in the school. Varun met Suman there, they married, and now have two daughters. Varun takes care of home responsibilities and helps Suman with her fast-food business which is well known in the region but small and growing slowly. Varun left school after completing the 12th grade to help his mother support the family. He held several jobs prior to marriage with the sole aim of bringing home money

for his family. After marrying Suman, he has settled into his role as the key supporter for Suman, the entrepreneur, who heads the family. Everyone helps her, including her spouse, Varun.

3) **“Mangal”** describes herself as a “very determined person”. She has an MBA and worked in a large automobile company before marriage. Her husband is an engineer-entrepreneur who started a small company and over a period of 25 years it has grown to a medium-large public company specializing in chemical engineering and installation of plants that use waste resources to produce vital products. The couple has one son who is now independent. Mangal left her job to look after him while he was young. She is not a public figure and she works quietly in her own areas of interest.

4) **“Saraswathi”** is the wife of a second-generation entrepreneur from the city of Coimbatore in South India. She is a university graduate and a cheerful person. This family has large, well-respected engineering businesses that manufacture machine tools. Their plants are among the largest in the world with products equal to international standards. While her husband heads the business operations, Saraswathi looks after the home and other family responsibilities.

5) **“Durga”** is the wife of the head of a large Mumbai business. Their company is one of the largest private landowners in Mumbai. They have multiple business interests and the company is well-known and well-respected for quality and service. She holds a university degree. She has a grown son and daughter. Her son graduated from a well-known U.S. university and recently joined the family business. Her entrepreneur-husband holds an engineering degree from a top U.S. engineering school. Durga is active in Mumbai and Indian society and is a well-known public figure.

Spouses from Europe

6) **“Brier”** is the wife of a French entrepreneur. She came from a large family. She completed her science degree before marriage. She has six children. Her husband has an MBA and has a rapid growing business.

7) **“Lene”** is the spouse of a Dutch entrepreneur. She has a daughter from a previous marriage and her husband has a son from his previous marriage. Lene is herself an entrepreneur, work she began before marriage. She holds a university degree and is influential in Dutch society. She is also part of an investment consulting firm. She has pursued her own interests throughout her life and marriages.

Spouses from the U.S.

8) **“Jaiwanti”** is a spouse from India but now settled in Boston. She came from a respected, progressive Indian family that believes in equal opportunity for sons and daughters. Her father and mother attached great importance to education and taught her by example. She pursued engineering in India and worked as a software engineer both before and after marriage. Her husband is a founder entrepreneur and well-known in the software business.

9) **“Brigitte”** is the first women engineer from one of the top engineering schools on the West Coast. She worked for an aeronautics company while pursuing graduate studies. Like Sarita, she too had hoped to complete her Ph.D. Her husband is a successful entrepreneur in the Boston area whose company is worth more than a billion dollars. He now devotes his time and energies to education and social welfare activities.

10) I interviewed **“Janelle”** in New York over a two-day period. She was born to a celebrity family that has large business interests all over the world, as well as a family foundation and a management school named after her family. Following her marriage, her entrepreneur husband became highly successful on his own in a different business field than that of his spouses’s family business. She has a Masters degree and was a teacher both before and for a short time after marriage. They have two daughters and one son.

11) **“Charlene”** is a doctor and the spouse of a renowned and highly successful entrepreneur from Boston. Her husband has large business that operates in over fifteen countries. Although she did not have a mentor as such, she remembers her mother as “guiding her life” and helping her make decisions. She notes that her mother was a teacher, but there was no library in the school. So her mother pulled together resources and started a library in the basement of the school and ran it for over twenty years. She made sure that children in her school were not deprived of books. At a young age, Charlene notes that this made a deep impression on her. She learned two important lessons from her mother: (1) instead of complaining, do what you can; and (2) books are second only to food in their importance and effect on children. Her children are grown up now and Charlene pursues her own interests with her husband helping her to realize her aspirations.

12) **“Aubrianna”** is the wife of a respected entrepreneur from Boston who is successful and a leader in his field. The couple has two sons. Aubrianna says she is happy with her life and takes “simple but important approaches” toward life issues.

1) Before Marriage: Education and Role Models

Spouses from India

Sarita said:

I was a M.A. from Mumbai University. I came from a wealthy family with houses and real estate in and around Mumbai. I wanted to pursue my PhD and then become a college professor, but my early marriage and associated responsibilities prevented me from pursuing a doctorate. I then partially fulfilled my passion by teaching at a local school.

My elder brother, who is very impressive, was my role model and he still is. I learned from him English-speaking skills, etiquette, manners, and interpersonal skills.

Varun, the sole husband-spouse, said:

I was too concerned about my family. I used to visit the school where my mother worked and feel sorry for the girls; some had no relatives in this world. I saw those situations and wanted to help them like my mother did. I could not pursue education further, although I wanted to, as I had to work to make a living for our family. I was impressed with Suman's leadership qualities as she ran the bakery in the institution. The institution taught these girls to be self-supporting. I ended up marrying that girl.

My mother is a role model for me. She worked all her life for a cause and she never complained.

Mangal said:

I was very shy and preferred privacy in my childhood. I never participated in school events but I used to read a lot—way ahead of my age and on any and all subjects that I could put my hand to. By age 18, I became interested in social life and wanted to go in that direction. My father, who was working in a local company, wanted me to get an MBA as he thought that would give me a good job with decent earning potential. So I ended up doing an MBA which was not my interest. I did work for a short time before I was married. When my husband started his enterprise, my MBA helped me to understand the issues he was facing and at times I could talk to him about the business.

I do not have any role model which I met with. However, by readings books and literature on Mahatma Gandhi, I can say that he is my role model.

Saraswathi said:

I came from a forward-looking but typical religious Hindu family. I was taught the core values of respecting and obeying elders, not mixing with boys and looking

after household duties. I learned classical dancing and participated in social events when I was a girl but then stopped as I grew older. I graduated and learned some cooking skills from my mother before I married.

My mother was a role model for me. I learned a lot from her. In addition, my elder sister had a great impact on me.

Durga said:

I came from a very open family environment. I was bold and had a lot of fun with family and friends before my marriage. I was never serious and took life very easy. I had no role model.

Four of the five Indian spouses (80%) have a university degree, but three of the five (60%) said that they are not happy with what they have achieved academically. Four of five (80%) had been heavily influenced by their parents in personal decisions such as education or marriage. The majority did not pursue what they wanted before marriage either due to circumstances or financial constraints.

I believe what each of the spouses saw and learned in their youth had a strong influence on the decisions they took in later years. For example, Varun, the husband-spouse, watched his parents work for a charitable organization that supports over 5,000 female students. At an early age, he says he developed sympathy for these girls even going so far as to help one girl by marrying her because, at least in part, he felt she was alone in the world.

Saraswathi also felt the influence of her parent's teachings as she performed her home responsibilities after marriage.

Durga is a free-minded person, and remained so after marriage, becoming socially active and independent even as she raised her family.

Mangal never wanted to obtain an MBA but did so to fulfill the wishes of her father. Clearly, she felt pressure at young age to do what her father desired. This is perhaps typical

in Indian culture, where respect for and obedience to one's elders is common.

Three spouses (60%) had worked before marriage but none had built a serious career.

All spouses had left work to take care of for home responsibilities. Out of the five Indian spouses, four had felt the impact of a role model or other influence in their lives.

Table 4.1
Spouses from India

Spouse	Education	Of/Upto Choice	Role Model	Other influence
Sarita	Yes	No	Yes. Brother	-
Varun	No	No	Yes. Mother	Charitable Org.
Mangal	Yes	No	No.	Books, Gandhi.
Saraswathi	Yes	Don't know	Mother	Elder Sister
Durga	Yes	Yes	No	No

Spouses from Europe

Brier, spouse of the French entrepreneur has a different perspective. She said:

I was part of a large family of eight children. I was the eldest and looked after my younger siblings all the time I was studying from school to college. I think that experience instilled in me, at an early age, a deep desire to be a mother. I got married when I was only nineteen and began a family. I have six children now, 4 sons and 2 daughters. I wanted to fulfill my duty as a mother first and then embark on my own career. I have now started to pursue activities outside the house of my own choosing. I maintain the support infrastructure of our home. As my husband's business flourishes, I help with human relations issues in our business. I am somewhat active in other social activities in and around Leon, France.

My mother was definitely a role model for me; in fact I used to imitate her when she was away.

Lene, spouse of the Dutch entrepreneur, is herself an entrepreneur. She said:

I grew up in an open environment and pursued my interests at every stage. Our children are now grown, and we are able to help each other and enjoy life. Contacts I have developed over a period of many years through my own business, help my husband and vice versa. We have developed a large network of associates and friends that has been helpful to both of us in business, as well as in personal life.

Abei Tania, the first women sailor to singlehandedly try to circumnavigate the world, was my role model. I love sailing and trade in sailing boats.

Both of these spouses received the education of their choice. Although both have different aspirations, both are pursuing their own interests and there has been, in their minds, no compromise. I also see the influence of circumstances while the spouses' businesses were in their growth years, but that impact was subtle and not forced on them. They picked what they liked from what they saw, and it was their choice. Both spouses say they are happy in what they are doing, and both say they know exactly what they hope to do in future. Home responsibilities are taken care of given that they are both from well-to-do families. Both had role models that had an impact on what they are doing today.

Table 4.2
Spouses from Europe

Spouse	Education	Of/Upto Choice	Role Model	Other influence
Brier	Yes	Yes	Yes. Mother	-
Lene	Yes	Yes	Yes. Abei Tania	-

Spouses from the U.S.

Jaiwanti, a software engineer and spouse of a leading entrepreneur, said:

I would describe myself as a working professional women with my own interests. My father always stressed the importance of education. He earned a degree in medicine after having a family, then pursued an M.S. in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

I had many role models when I was growing up who inspired me in different dimensions. I learned from my father who was hardworking, sincere and always stressed importance of education. I learned risk taking from my mother who encouraged my father to pursue his degree in medicine while taking care of young children and again supported his decision to pursue an M.S. later in life. From my grandfather, I learned the importance of simplicity in life. My teachers instilled in me the love of learning, especially science.

Brigitte, an engineer, said:

I would describe myself before marriage as an independent person. I had a Master's degree in mechanical engineering from MIT which I earned while working

full time. I was planning to get a Stanford Ph.D.. I was working in the aerospace industry.

No, I did not have any role models.

Janelle, who is from a renowned American family said:

I grew up in a disciplined but completely free environment before marriage. I studied up to a Masters and taught in a school for a brief period before marriage. As I was familiar with the business environment, I supported my husband in his entrepreneurial efforts. I have a passion for people and I think that helped him build his own business independently.

I had no direct role models but due to my love of English literature, from time to time, I was influenced by great poets and writers like Longfellow, William Shakespeare.

Charlene, the doctor from Boston, said:

I have an undergraduate degree in English Literature from a well-known U.S. university, and I wanted to pursue a career in teaching. This led me to social work in New York, where I realized I should do something about the problems facing children in today's society. I changed my decision to forego a medical degree and enrolled in medical school. I graduated from medical school in Massachusetts with a major in pediatric medicine to become a specialist doctor. My higher education did not come easily. A major problem was convincing my family, including my father who himself was a doctor. Very few women were doctors in those days, and those who were doctors never married because no one wanted to marry them. They thought I should not pursue medical education because after I became a doctor no one would marry me. This was a big concern, in their own good faith, for my family members.

I do not think I had a role model, but when I look back I can say that, though I lost my mother at my early age, I learned a lot from her. The two most important things I learned from her were that there still remains a lot to be done for the children of this world. They are the future of mankind. And instead of complaining for the shortcomings, do what you can.

Aubrianna said:

I would describe myself as not a very confident person during the days before my marriage. I was not sure who I was, but I was a happy person all the time.

It is sad that I did not have any role models. I loved different people for their virtues or strong points but that is quite different from having them as role models.

All five of the U.S. spouses received an excellent education of their own choosing. Two of the five have made extra efforts to complete their studies. Brigitte, completed her Master's degree in engineering while working full time and Charlene changed her path from literature and completed her medical education as she wanted to be a doctor.

Brigitte and Charlene are examples of forward-looking, ambitious women who still aspire to work in their chosen, highly demanding fields.

Jaiwanti's father showed extraordinary courage by obtaining professional education against many odds. This proved to be an effective example for her daughter who studied to become an engineer and then a life partner of an entrepreneur.

In terms of role models, two had role models, two had a special person or writer they admired and one had no role model.

Eleven of the twelve spouses were college-educated (over 90%), and of those, five (40%) went on to graduate school and became professionally qualified. Two have graduate engineering education from prestigious schools; one has an MBA and one a professional doctor. 75% of the spouses had some kind of work experience prior to their marriage.

Table 4.3
Spouses from the U.S.

Spouse	Education	Of/Upto Choice	Role Model	Other influence
Jaiwanti	Yes	Yes	Yes. Parents	Teachers
Brigitte	Yes	Yes/No	No	-
Janelle	Yes	Yes	No.	Poets, Writers
Charlene	Yes	Yes	No	Mother
Aubrianna	Yes	Yes	No	People

2) Entrepreneurial Venture, Contributions, Home Responsibilities

Spouses from India

Sarita said:

My response to the entrepreneurial aspirations of my husband was positive. We had limited funds for business. I took a job as a teacher in a local school and with those earnings I managed the home while leaving my husband free to do business-related work. I was supportive of his aspirations to become an entrepreneur.

I contributed in a very small manner. I typed his letters every night; those were the days of manual typing. I used to do filing of letters also. I would give my opinion when asked. I do not know whether this was useful to him or not but I think he felt supported due to my interest in his daily routine. He says this support helped him gain confidence.

Varun said:

I had seen her working in the institution bakery which used to supply products to industry canteens. My wife was very enterprising so when she started a fast-food operation, I supported her. I looked after our two daughters, took them to school. Since our business was related to food, there was no question of cooking separately at home. I also looked after outside details such as purchasing and logistics of the business.

Mangal said:

I knew he was extraordinary and that he would make it. I left my job and decided to look after our son until he was grown. I also contributed a little in the initial formation and running of the business. But then it picked up fast and was soon being run professionally. With an MBA I can understand what my husband says about business. I have no experience with which to advise him, but I can ask questions and my involvement may be of some help to him. But that is more from a loving wife taking interest rather than any expertise that I can claim.

Saraswathi said:

When I married they already had businesses. When my husband expanded operations, he told me what he is doing rather than asked me and there was no question of my support or objection to the matter. But I did happily accept and wished him well. I also looked after our house and business guests well in keeping with family tradition. I do not see that I had any direct contribution, but in a way I am helpful to the whole show.

Durga said:

We already had large operations. After our marriage I contributed in the business by being on the board of directors and expanding the business outside India. Our export director directly reported to me and I introduced some new concepts in the business. My husband and I are supportive of each other and we take decisions in consultation. Home responsibilities are taken care of with a support system but I do look into things occasionally.

All five Indian spouses (100%) responded positively to the idea of either starting a new venture or growing the existing business further. All offered contribution, direct or indirect, to the business venture and supported their spouses in some way.

Home responsibilities were willingly looked after by the spouses in all cases. In particular, growing children were given priority over personal interests by 4 out of 5 spouses. One spouse had home support at her disposal and so was able to continue her outside-the-family interests.

Table 4.4
Spouses from India

Spouse	Response	Contribution	Home Duties	DiscussBusiness
Sarita	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Varun	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mangal	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Saraswathi	Positive	No	Yes	No
Durga	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes

Spouses from Europe

Brier, the French spouse said:

Initially I myself wanted to be a mother first and as such I devoted my early family years to growing my six children. My two small ones are now 7 and 4 years old, and still need some of my attention. Otherwise, now I have begun to find free time for my own interests. I was supportive of my husband when he bought this company from a businessman who wanted to retire. Thereafter, my husband grew the company rapidly over the past 20 years. I looked after our children and the home, and my support was limited to that. He talks to me about business and I do take an interest these days. I also look after some PR issues for our company. I am just

about 40 years now, and I hope hereafter I can undertake many things of my liking and enjoy life with my family.

Lene, the Dutch spouse said:

Since I was myself doing business since before we met, I was very happy when he talked about starting a business venture. Our children are grown up and together we can devote time for home and also enjoy the life. We do talk business together and act accordingly.

Both European spouses support their spouse in their business ventures. Although both have different aspirations, the common thread is that while pursuing their own interests they are contributing to the businesses and still manage the home front.

Both spouses talk about the business with their entrepreneur/spouse. Both are also trying to pursue their own interests as well. Brier gave priority to raising her children, while Lene's children are grown and in fact are now a great help to her.

Table 4.5
Spouses from Europe

Spouse	Response	Contribution	Home Duties	DiscussBusiness
Brier	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lene	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes

Spouses from the U.S.

Jaiwanti, an engineer, said:

My husband was bent on going on his own. I encouraged him to try his idea and was supportive of his decision. I was working as a software engineer and continued to do so when he had to go off the payroll to start the company.

Later when his work became more demanding, I chose to quit my job to address our other priority, i.e., looking after the kids, which allowed him to concentrate on the startup”

She added a valuable comment that is representative of many working women who work endlessly and provide support to the family and spouse. She said:

There are always competing needs, and constant juggling is required in order to

prioritize and focus to find a proper balance. I struggled like anyone else making those choices: providing financial support, raising children, and being there for my spouse.

Her spouse did talk about the business with her, seeking her views and suggestions. She said:

He discussed business with me. My technical background helped me appreciate his ideas. Although I was not involved in either designing or engineering the products, he often bounced off ideas and hopefully my probing questions aided his problem solving. I was always there to listen to him and cheer him all the way.

Brigitte, an engineer, said:

My husband had started the business the year before I met him, but at time we were married, the company had many proposals and few orders.

I always worked hard. I did all the work at home. Except for 10 years when the children were small, I also held a full-time job. In the early years, I also did a lot of help with recruiting—business dinners, real estate tours, etc. We talked about business and I offered opinions.

Janelle said:

My husband had innovative ideas that were far ahead of time then. I had confidence in him and his ideas. I was not in a position to follow all that he talked about, but I had faith in him and his abilities. I supported him always and encouraged him to go ahead. I was used to big business discussions before marriage, and in a way I was unafraid of risk taking. I asked him about developments, and we used to talk like best friends. I reassured him, showed him that I was taking good care of our two daughters and one son which further cheered him up to go ahead. I was unable to help him in problem solving but I knew he was capable of finding his own answers. It all worked extremely well. I am happy about that.

Charlene said,

My husband is a man of positive attitude. He is very optimistic and confident. These qualities appealed to me. He is a 'Can do' type of a person, a creative smart man. His enterprising spirit was evident from the very beginning. I saw him helping his Dad in the family printing company when there were problems. He helped find new markets. I used to accompany him to the press shop floor. While driving to and from the printing press, he used to tell me his ideas. He joined a company and then merged into a big corporation. Creativity was evident in him. He had a great idea for his own company and he initially worked on this new venture from our extra bedroom.

I participated with him. He would bounce ideas off me. I talked to staff and built relationships. I do not know the details of his work, I am not an MBA. But bouncing ideas with me may have given him some fresh perspectives.

My husband had to work long hours and he travelled a lot, both in the U.S. and internationally. I looked after the home front, still do. We had babysitters, a nanny, and a good support system, but I willingly took the basic responsibility to manage the home so he could be freed up.

Aubrianna said:

It was exciting for me to see him take on new challenges; we grew together—and continue to. There were hard times too. I loved being part of an exciting new experience; the willingness was easy! My husband was great. He shared his business experiences

As busy as he was (he is) family came first. He always made time. I did not work, so it was my great pleasure to have time for our two sons and our own relationship.

Yes, he did (and does) discuss business with me. I am a great sounding board-listener and he would sometimes take my opinions.

All five American spouses (100%) responded positively to the idea of either starting a new venture or growing the business further. All of them offered contributions, directly or indirectly, to the business venture and supported their spouses in every way.

Home responsibilities were looked after by the spouses in all cases. In particular, caring for growing children was given priority by all five spouses (100%).

All five were consulted by their husbands on business and all of them showed interest and encouraged them to go ahead. All spouses had confidence in spouse's ability and a willingness to take home responsibility

Table 4.6
Spouses from the U.S.

Spouse	Response	Contribution	Home Duties	Discuss Business
Jaiwanti	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brigitte	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Janelle	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Charlene	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aubrianna	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes

All twelve interviewed spouses (100%) had a positive response to the idea of starting the business. All (100%) the twelve spouses decided to take the responsibility of looking after home growing the children. Eleven out of twelve spouses (Over 90%), said they were consulted on business issues by their counterparts and they contributed, asked questions and tried to help motivate the entrepreneur. Only 1 out of 12 thinks she could not contribute in the business matters and business subjects are not discussed with her.

3) Social Responsibilities; Helping others; Advice to spouses of future entrepreneurs

Spouses from India

Sarita said,

In my opinion, to the possible extent, spouses should donate funds to school education. I feel education at a young age is very important and many young children are deprived of this necessity. I think the spouses of entrepreneurs have less time to devote to anything else.

I do not think I have done anything special that anyone would want to learn from me. But if someone would like to hear my views, I would say that the spouse of an entrepreneur is important for entrepreneurship. She or he may need to make priorities in life and be prepared to sacrifice immediate pleasure for a long-term goal. The spouse can enhance happiness at home even while passing enduring anxiety or tension. Spouses should develop good people skills. With a husband/wife team, the process of creation and the creation itself are both enjoyable and satisfying; I can tell you that from my experience.

Varun said:

I will eventually work for the same charitable organization my parents worked for. This is a well-known charitable organization that supports over 5,000 female students. There is a school and all other necessary facilities for the girls. Many industries support the girls by buying bakery products and other food items that the girls make themselves. The organization is like a small, self-supporting village in itself. At a certain age, each girl leaves the organization to make room for younger ones coming along, but each girl has been prepared to find her own way in society.

Advice? Confidence does not follow from insight alone, but can be developed

from the examples of role models, combined with personal experience. So look around and learn to go ahead.

Mangal said:

I do not think social responsibility lies with any particular section. It is a collective effort and everyone should take his/her share of it. Entrepreneurship, especially for women is very important and I feel spouses of entrepreneurs can guide new women entrants to some extent, however an entrepreneur needs to be self confident to go ahead and the success or failure will depend on many other factors and he/she should be prepared to be entirely responsible for the outcome. No advisor will be able to guarantee the success. Be confident will be my advice to new comers.

Saraswathi said:

Our company has taken a major role in education and other social work. Besides, we create job opportunities and keep a large workforce happy—which is in itself a good work. I am not a person who can guide anybody. I can say that growing children and fulfilling home responsibilities is very important.

Durga said:

Our company has a charitable trust headed by a very competent person and it looks into areas and offers help. We also offer scholarships to needy students

I do not think I am capable of helping others to perform. That is beyond my capacity.

I will say to the spouses of future entrepreneurs—please live a balanced, full life. There is life in and out of the home.

All five Indian spouses (100%) accepted the concept of social responsibility and helping others. However, 4 of 5 expressed doubt over some parts. All five had some advice for newcomers.

Table 4.7
Spouses from India

Spouse	Social	Help to New	Guidance	Additional
Sarita	Yes	Not possible	Enjoy the journey	Happiness
Varun	Everyone	Yes	Develop confidence	Learn
Mangal	Yes	Yes	Be confident	-
Saraswathi	Yes	-	Home is important	Childrn
Durga	Yes	No	Balanced life	Home&outside

Spouses from Europe

Brier, the French spouse, said,

I feel every French person should do away with the ghettos, stretch out a hand to all those men and women who feel cast themselves aside because of their social situation or origins. We must once again make an open, generous secular society inspiring harmony between all the French. Finally, we must reaffirm the fundamental value of ensuring equal opportunities, a task which I believe begins at school''. She herself works in some social areas which could not be revealed. For the spouses of future entrepreneurs she advises, ' ' It is important to know what you want to do and pursue it.

Lene, the Dutch spouse said:

I really do not think social responsibility lies with only a select few in society. It is basically the government's job. However, every citizen needs to contribute whatever he or she can to society, be it funds or services or just paying taxes and abiding by the law and moral values. It is not easy to guide someone else where you are able to control the actions and can not be responsible for results. Yes you can share your experiences, like I am doing in this interview, and people can learn from experiences of other's. So it is more to the learner rather than to the person who may guide. I would say to the spouses of future entrepreneurs that never leave once you decide, persevearance always conquers difficulties.

Both spouses agreed that all individuals have social responsibility, not just the spouses of entrepreneurs. Neither believes that entrepreneurship can be developed solely by helping others, and both have messages for newcomers.

Table 4.8
Spouses from Europe

Spouse	Social	Help to New	Guidance	Additional
Brier	Yes	-	Pursue dreams	-
Lene	No	No	Never leave	Perseverance

Spouses from the U.S.

Jaiwanti said:

Every individual has social responsibilities. It is just that the spouse of an entrepreneur usually has more opportunities and resources to fulfill these responsibilities. It is an opportunity for the spouses as individuals to move forward their agenda, their passions, and social issues that are important to them. They have the ability to lend their voice in addition to financial support to important social causes. It is also an opportunity for the spouses to find their own niche and establish their identity.

As this spouse came from India, and she is a software engineer and in the field of business, I asked her opinion about whether spouses of entrepreneurs can help create jobs and wealth for India. As India is an especially active country these days, particularly in the field of software, I was interested in her views. She said:

India is a hotbed of entrepreneurial activity right now. Anyone who has the interest and the energy can contribute to creating jobs and wealth for India, including the spouses of entrepreneurs. Being a spouse of an entrepreneur does not necessarily guarantee success unless there is an excellent idea, a well thought-out plan, and a team of committed people to execute that plan. But the spouse of an entrepreneur frequently has networking and other resources.

She also shared her advice for spouses of future entrepreneurs:

Enjoy the journey. It is a difficult path but a satisfying one. An entrepreneurial career requires many sacrifices along the way. The model we chose required one of the partners to spend all the time building an enterprise and the other to address the home front with limited income. It is also a lonely experience where others may not be able to relate to it. However, it is a journey worth pursuing.

I asked Brigitte her views on the social responsibilities of spouses of entrepreneurs, especially when they may have an increased ability to contribute to society. She said: “*I don’t understand what you mean by social? Do you mean philanthropic? Everyone—men and women—should have social responsibility in addition to whatever else they are doing.*” I was impressed by this statement as I knew that together with her husband/entrepreneur they

have donated millions of dollars to various social causes including education; in addition, they have also given their time. I knew this spouse had given public lectures on various issues including guidance to women pursuing an engineering education. She spoke on these subjects using her as example, coupled with the experience she had while still living at home, where her father was an innovator with numerous patents, and also by working in the technically demanding engineering industry.

I asked her whether spouses of entrepreneurs can create jobs and wealth by helping new entrepreneurs, especially women entrepreneurs. She said:

Successful startups fuel our economy. One of the problems for women entrepreneurs is the pull of societal issues on their time. This is not an equitable world and women are expected to do everything to maintain the family. This makes total focus difficult. Until society pays more than lip service to the welfare of the family and equal responsibility for all family members, male or female, this imbalance will not change.

She has valuable advice to newcomers in this field. When asked what one can learn from her experience, she said:

Awareness. I have met a lot of entrepreneurs over the years. The only thing they all seem to have in common is no long-term memory for pain. Most of us look at a situation and say, "I don't want to do that again." An entrepreneur says, "Business opportunity."

Janelle said:

Maybe the spouse of an economically successful entrepreneur has some advantages and resources to go out and help with social issues. However, I feel it is the responsibility of every individual to do his best for the society.

I do not think entrepreneurship can be developed by the spouses of entrepreneurs. It is one thing to share experiences but quite different to motivate a person to be an entrepreneur. It is the collective outcome of many things put together including education, experience, and passion.

I think new entrants in this field should have a passion for entrepreneurship; then you see the path as you walk ahead.

Charlene said:

Every one of us can practice responsible social behavior in whatever we do. In our organization, we are aware of being fair to everyone. We especially consider the issues of our women employees as we understand their special duties as women. My husband is very aware of the social issues and significantly works for noble causes.

I did not go on business travels but mostly remained at home fulfilling my duties as wife and mother for our young children. I feel you need to be understanding toward your spouse, understand their special needs as entrepreneurs. You need to support them and not undercut them for missing a birthday or a dinner etc.

Aubrianna said:

I do not think it has to be responsibility (social) but it is a major bonus to both the spouses if there is interest/commitment in sharing in the entrepreneur's life"

I don't think spouses can help create jobs and wealth but certainly being supportive and sharing resources and reaching out to others is most beneficial.

Advice: Be sure there is time for each other and try to take interest in your spouse's passion/interests, be sure there is life beyond business. My husband always stresses the importance of having a balanced life, and I agree with that. And he does live by this and encourages his employees to do so as well.

Four out of five American spouses (80%) responded positively to the idea of social responsibility, however, they felt that this is a responsibility for every individual not just for the spouses of entrepreneurs. One spouse (20%) said it cannot be considered a responsibility but can be a major bonus if both the spouses work on it together.

On helping women entrepreneurs, one spouse (talking about India) feels it is quite possible in India; the two U.S. spouses feel that sharing experiences is more realistic. One spouse feels that gender is important, and that society must do more than give lip service to the topic. All five spouses (100%) had advice to offer newcomers to the field, drawn directly from their own experiences as the spouses of entrepreneurs.

Table 4.9
Spouses from the U.S.

Spouse	Social	Help to New	Guidance	Additional
Jaiwanti	Everybody	Yes	Enjoy juorney	Pursue
Brigitte	Everyone	Gender issues	Awareness	Think Differently
Janelle	Everyone	Yes	Passion	Do it
Charlene	Everyone	-	Understanding	Provide Support
Aubrianna	By Will	Yes	Life as a whole	Time For You Two

Findings

I found that 75% of the interviewed spouses were self-determined personalities, happy but not satisfied, and so still trying to achieve something that interested them. All the spouses had assumed the role of supporting their family.

Open-minded and Understanding

This characteristic was found common among the spouses before their marriage to the entrepreneur. The interviews suggest that their backgrounds and character before marriage proved they were open-minded, willing to consider all options before making decisions. Most said they looked for a career. They indicated a willingness to listen and to consider the views of another side, but they also said they wanted do act as they believed was right but without hurting family members.

Every spouse indicated that even before marriage to the entrepreneur, they had an understanding of the environment they were about to enter. Most said they felt a sense of duty but looked forward to doing something more, achieving something. They displayed an inclination to go along with their family needs and maintain good relations.

Role Models: My Observations

The interviews indicated that most spouses had a well-defined sense of the role of “entrepreneur’s spouse”, even if it had never been illustrated to them by a specific role model.

After Marriage, as the Entrepreneur Starts Out

Most spouses said they realized that the entrepreneur they were supporting was not someone who would be going to the office at 8:00 a.m. and returning home at 5:00 p.m. to lead a well-defined and predictable life.

In 3 out of 12 cases (25%), the entrepreneur had already embarked upon his/her entrepreneurial journey and the spouse was aware of it prior to marriage. In 9 cases (75%) the “entrepreneur spirit” evolved after marriage. But in all cases (100%) the entrepreneurial spirit revealed itself early in their married life and was supported by 100% of the spouses.

Table 4.10

Entrepreneurship	Before Marriage	After Marriage	Total
Spouses from India	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5
Spouses from Europe	-	2 (100%)	2
Spouses from USA	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	5
Total	3 (25%)	9 (75%)	12

Table 4.10 shows that thrice as many spouses encountered entrepreneurial situations after marriage as the number of those who knew what it would entail before they married the entrepreneur. We also see that the West in my small sample is apt to be more enterprising, with 100% of my sample starting their own businesses, and one entrepreneur venturing out

even before marriage. In India (East) 60% are new entrepreneurs; the other 40% are working in already- established family businesses which were passed on to them from fathers.

All spouses in my sample, who had been working as professionals opted to leave their jobs to care for their family and growing children, and to (directly and indirectly) support the entrepreneur. All the spouses from the sample, irrespective of East or West, said they encouraged the entrepreneur to try out new ideas and were fully supportive of his/her decisions.

One U.S. entrepreneur, when founded his business, ran it from home. His spouse said:

I supported the idea to combine home with business in order to save costs during startup. And I think my willingness demonstrated to him my confidence that such a home-office arrangement would be only a temporary phase owing to his enterprising abilities as an entrepreneur. It also demonstrated my willingness to participate in the risks and sacrifices of starting an enterprise by mixing home and business in one location, which in turn boosted his confidence while working to grow the business.

During our interview one spouse said, “*At the time we were together in it, we just did it. We even never fully realized the risks involved. We were young enough and had the drive to address any challenge that this path might demand from us.*”

A spouse from India, whose husband became an entrepreneur when he was 38, said she agreed with her husband’s request to use all their savings to start a manufacturing factory, and she went back to her profession as a teacher to pay for the family’s expenses. She said:

We had enough savings that we could have managed without my going to work. But I wanted to keep our home finances separate from his business. I wanted it to be clear and also show my support for his entrepreneurial venture. My decision to go to work served as an inspiration for my husband. He soon settled the business on a firm footing and I was able to stop working and return home to look after it in a more complete way.

All the spouses said that they were happy in their lives as part of an entrepreneurial family. After we had completed one spouse's interview, her husband (the entrepreneur) dropped in to say, *"All the credit goes to my wife. I try to spend as much time as I can with my family these days. I now know that it's easier to be an entrepreneur than an entrepreneur's wife."*

The woman entrepreneur said:

My husband is very helpful and he assumes all responsibility for our daughters including taking them to school and playground. We both want our daughters to study well. Due to my husband's responsible help, I can work hard and concentrate on my business completely.

Tables 4.11, 4.12, and 4.13 illustrate the details of leaving jobs, looking after children, other home responsibilities, and providing support to the entrepreneur.

Table 4.11
Spouses from India

Spouse	Left job	Child care	Home respon.	SupportSpouse
Sarita	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Varun	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mangal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Saraswathi	*	Yes	Yes	Yes
Durga	*	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4.12
Spouses from Europe

Spouse	Left job	Child care	Home respon.	SupportSpouse
Brier	*	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lene	*	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4.13
Spouses from the U.S.

Spouse	Left job	Child care	Home respon.	SupportSpouse
Jaiwanti	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brigitte	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Janelle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Charlene	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aubrianna	*	Yes	Yes	Yes

* = These spouses were not working.

Child/home care yes = Assumed responsibility is implied (with or without support services)

The above tables illustrate a commonality among the spouses of my sample from India, Europe, and the U.S.: every spouse who had a job said that he/she had left that job to look after growing children and take care of home responsibilities. Those who were not in a job also said they took the same actions. All the responses from interview respondents, regardless of the region, suggested that spouses accepted the responsibility of looking after children.

All (100%) the spouses from the sample said they were supportive of their entrepreneur-spouse's decision to pursue entrepreneurship, and they helped their spouse to the fullest extent. All five spouses from the U.S. (100%) said or implied that they found it exciting to see and help their spouse resolve entrepreneurial challenges.

Contributions from Spouses

Besides looking after home responsibilities and children, all the spouses seem to have made direct and significant contributions to the entrepreneurship.

At one point, a spouse said:

Entrepreneurs need support and caring. Small, ordinary pleasures like birthdays

and vacations can be sacrificed. Entrepreneurs have less time to spend with family. Even daily time spent on ordinary tasks with the entrepreneur is substantially reduced, and what time there is together is often devoted to discussing business issues. But you learn to make the best use of quality time.

After the success of his enterprise, the spouse who had initially worked as a teacher to support her husband's startup business said, *"I joined him as the director of human relations and eventually pursued my own career in our business."*

A spouse who had been working as a software engineer said:

I gave strong support to my husband/entrepreneur by continuing to work and also looking after home responsibilities, in order to enable him to leave his former employment and try his own ideas for a new business. Later, as he became increasingly busy and was making progress in the growth of his enterprise, I willingly quit my job to address the other priorities of our family life as well as to contribute technically to the needs of entrepreneurship.

All of the female spouses of my sample (92%) said that, for them, family came first. They agreed on this point unanimously. They said they enjoyed seeing their children receive proper educations, sometimes taking the role of a mentor-guide.

From my sample, in two cases (16%) the spouses were engineers and the entrepreneur's business was related to engineering. In one case (8%) the spouse had an MBA degree. But in nine cases (75%), the spouse's professional experience was not related to the business of their entrepreneur counterpart; for example, one spouse was a doctor but her husband's business was related to software. Nevertheless, in each case, the spouses said they learned the basic aspects of their entrepreneur's business, and his/her specific needs, and adapted themselves to try addressing those needs.

In all cases the spouses said they handled the home front and also took an active interest in entrepreneurial developments by asking questions that might contribute to the entrepreneur's thought process, offering suggestions or airing different views. All spouses

said the entrepreneurs talked business at home with them and they took an interest in the business. These discussions, as the spouses said, were often policy decisions, and they asked questions that might help the entrepreneur to make decisions. Spouses mentioned that they were able to serve as sounding boards for testing new ideas, problems, or decisions.

Social Responsibilities

Eleven of twelve spouses believed that social responsibilities are incumbent on everyone in society. The twelfth spouse believes it is not a responsibility but instead a factor of interest and commitment to social work. Two spouses from India said they have made donations to education and other fields. From other public sources, I discovered that four of the five spouses and their husband-entrepreneurs from US had made significant donations to causes including education. The donations were made jointly, in the names of both the entrepreneur and spouse.

Summary

While it may be helpful to understand the demanding requirements of entrepreneurship; it is equally helpful for the spouses of entrepreneurs to know they are not alone in meeting those demands and providing support for the spouse/entrepreneur. A number of common threads came out of the interviews which I offer below:

- Spouse and entrepreneur are supportive of each other
- Both take on responsibilities in every area where they feel they are skilled (including household responsibilities)
- The entrepreneur is strongly supported by the spouse, especially at the startup stage.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusion

This research study had several objectives. First, by interviewing spouses of entrepreneurs from different backgrounds, countries, and cultures, I hoped that some common measures of the role of spouses in entrepreneurship could be identified. Second, I had many questions in mind about the role of spouses in entrepreneurship, as mentioned in Chapter 1. Third, I wanted to know the aspirations of spouses, their backgrounds, and interests that went beyond their role in entrepreneurship. Finally, I wanted to check my own experience as an entrepreneur and my wife's experience as the spouse of an entrepreneur.

The spouse of an entrepreneur influences every facet of the entrepreneur's life. At all times there will be work that needs to be done, irrespective of the usual working hours of home or business. This will have direct consequences resulting in change and adjustments of activities related to occupational, family, and social life. In my interviews, I found that every spouse had devoted their attention to growing children and home affairs. Even the seven of twelve spouses (58%) who had held jobs left them to attend to home responsibilities. Their lives changed at every turn.

As per the studied sample compassionate spouse and considerate family members, combined with some truthful friends, can go a long way toward accomplishing a successful business venture. Spouses felt they should expect that life will change in numerous ways

that are not easily predicted and that it is good to try to cautiously judge how this enterprising way of life will shape family income, issues that arise due to the entrepreneur remaining away from home and family, support levels needed for the entrepreneur and spouse, commitment to children and other family members, and activities that are part of the spouse's personal interests.

Most spouses and entrepreneurs, from my sample, appeared to be good at managing their time. They seemingly understand and practice the use of "quality time" at home rather than "quantity time."

I observed that all the spouses that I studied said they placed great emphasis on their children's education and health. They said they use the time they have available to interact meaningfully with children for fun or for passing on words of advice and teaching in subtle ways. Sarita gave an example of "quality time" and "teaching the child in everyday activities." She said:

All the parents had to visit the school when inoculations were administered at school by the state health department. I had gone to school with my daughter. Students along with their mother or father were standing in a queue waiting their turn for a shot. Just before the shot, seeing the needle, boys and girls became afraid and asked the parent if this would hurt. Most parents used to reply, "No, it will not hurt at all, don't worry." They used to tell the child to look here and there or talk some other things to divert his/her attention. Then the nurse could stick the needle in, which hurts naturally. The children would cry, leave, and the next child came in. When my daughter's turn came, she asked me the same question, "Mom will this hurt?" I looked at her smilingly and told her, "Yes, honey, it will hurt a little but you will stand to it, no need to worry." After the shot, my daughter was happy that I had told her the truth and her confidence in me was restored because I had not lied to her. She had also discovered her own confidence to stand up in an unpleasant situation.

As seen in my study, startups take many years of hard work. In the initial years of business, when things are new and paths have yet not unfolded, an entrepreneur lives the

business. He/She thinks about it all the time when awake. The spouse's time is needed for consultation. When the spouse and family understand and support the entrepreneur's commitment to the business and they remain helpful. In my sample there was no case of misunderstanding the entrepreneur's aims, ambitions and drive.

From my interview with spouses, I found that spouses are efficient in handling numerous different issues. Many times they devise innovative ways to handle issues. Like the entrepreneur, they too look at the world in an active and positive way. They too seem to have a "can do" attitude. They too like and receive the satisfaction of achievement. The spouses of entrepreneurs gave me the impression that they worship creativity and achievements and, like the entrepreneurs, they also show an enterprising spirit toward their own activities

Wholehearted support from spouse, family, and friends appears to help the entrepreneur avoid burnout. The spouse who takes an interest in the business can provide the entrepreneur with advice and constructive criticism. The spouses interviewed said that the entrepreneurs kept them informed about business developments from the beginning. Spouses also said they can ask questions that business associates may not be able to ask. These questions from spouses help the entrepreneur derive answers and find ways to address the issues at hand.

I would like to cite an example, as told by Janelle, one of my interviewed spouses. I believe this example illustrates the questions and/or constructive criticisms that the spouse said they could offer to the entrepreneur. Janelle said:

My husband-entrepreneur was considering a proposal to expand the business outside the U.S. wherein we were to acquire a company to expand our operations in that country. There was this person 'ABC' who was in the forefront of the negotiations to make the deal happen. It involved quite complex issues, most of

which I did not understand, but my husband had talked to me about the deal. He had complete faith in 'ABC' and his ability to work out the details of this deal.

The negotiating team of the company visited us, and I thought they were genuine people and said so to my husband. However, in the end, the deal failed and we lost a couple of million in the episode, which went on for months. After the wheel came full circle, while talking one evening, my husband said to me, "Janelle, the deal was actually good but it was a failure because of that person, ABC. What do you think?" I said, "I think the deal failed not because of ABC but because of your failure to correctly judge ABC's abilities.

In my interviews, it was apparent that spouses' remarks at times bring the entrepreneur down to earth or motivate him or her when things are not going well. Involvement of one's spouse leads to greater tolerance of the many demands a business makes on the time and energy of both people. It also helps both to share moments of happiness associated with the success of the business.

If starting an enterprise is considered a positive and exciting experience for the entrepreneur, participating in the entrepreneurship and taking on related responsibilities can be a creative and exciting experience for the spouse. One spouse interviewed in my study said, "*Negative thinking does not create but positive thinking does.*" That is perhaps why, after the enterprise has achieved a certain level of success, that spouses feel it important to pursue their own personal interests in conjunction with continued responsibilities of the enterprising family.

Here I would like to share three examples from my sample, one each from India, Europe, and the U.S., to exemplify this point.

Mangal, a spouse from India now works in a way she said she had thought of even before she was married. She obtained her MBA as her father requested. After marriage she willingly left her job in the automobile company to support her entrepreneur-husband and their son. Now that her son is 20 years old and her husband-entrepreneur has developed a

professionally managed public company, she has embarked on her dream of social work. She is using her MBA education in the cause of rural employment in India. During the interview, she said,

Khadi is a hand-spun cotton fabric that symbolizes values and ethics, as Mahatma Gandhi introduced it for self-reliance for the Indian people when under British rule. This organization I work for, helps set up 'village industries' in rural areas for generating rural employment with the locally available raw material and technical know how. Pottery works, Coir works, cotton and handicrafts are some similar other industries. These goods produced by rural masses are then marketed by government institutions. I share my education and experience to these people by working for this organization. I am finally doing what I always wanted to and I am feeling happy to be able to help.

Brier, the spouse from France, after accomplishing her dream of being a mother of six children at an early age, is now looking into organizing a PR department for the family business. She also is doing social activities in Leon. She said:

I never intended to start an activity and then abandon it for personal reasons. I do not like to occupy decorative seats if I am unable to do justice to the work. With that view, I was focused on my home and growing children and supporting my husband in his business dreams, to best of my abilities, for twenty years. I feel I have fulfilled that responsibility: the children are grown and our business enterprise has achieved a certain level of success, and I can now look further into areas of my own interests.

Charlene, a U.S. spouse, had complete confidence in her husband-entrepreneur. She was a doctor herself but opted to leave work long enough to raise her children. Today she is back to fulfilling her dream concerning the children of the world. Her interview illustrates the point that some spouses turn to pursuing their own interests after a certain level of entrepreneurial success has been achieved and after having fulfilled self-defined "home responsibilities".

Charlene said she started a mission to publish children's medical stories to entertain, educate, and reassure both parents and children. As a pediatrician, she observed that the children turned into very different creatures when they were sick. She said the idea of writing stories for sick children evolved as a natural combination of her professional experience and her childhood love of reading. She feels strongly that children do better with their illnesses if they understand what is happening to them and if they realize they will get better. She has now become an author; her first book is published and the second will appear in September 2005.

The spouses interviewed and studied in this research tend toward social activities of the sort that promotes entrepreneurial goals more broadly. As they have seen the difficulties closely while journeying through entrepreneurship, they wish to help others who are on creative paths. Entrepreneurs seemed willing to listen to advice from their spouses while making decisions about business matters or social issues, and spouses are supporting entrepreneurs and encouraging them to help worthy causes. The entrepreneurs may make decisions involving millions of dollars based solely on their business acumen; but it is my impression that donation decisions depend heavily on their discussions with spouses and tilt toward the spouse's feelings rather than the entrepreneur's instincts. Later in their career, the entrepreneurs, who were part of this study, were found to firmly support and help their spouses to pursue their own interests, and together they share and enjoy these achievements.

For example, I would like to cite a specific case where the entrepreneur now supports his spouse's desire to fulfill her aspirations. The pediatrician spouse said she has come full circle—from watching her mother set up a school library, to attending medical school herself, to a successful career as a pediatrician, to supportive spouse of an entrepreneur, and

now to a new role as author of children's books. She said her husband had put his substantial resources to work to help her open a publishing company, thus utilizing his expertise in the printing business acquired when he first worked with his father on printing technology. This spouse said she now plans to pursue a career writing educational books for children and parents aimed at educating them on medical issues.

This is a good indicator that in the later stages of the entrepreneur's career, he/she may be in a position to support their spouse as they finally have an opportunity to pursue their own interests.

After working on this subject for the past four months, and given my own experience as an entrepreneur and my wife's as the spouse of an entrepreneur, it is clear to me that just as entrepreneurs create ideas and build organizations, so too do their spouses create support systems that help and enable the entrepreneurs to build their enterprises. In best of all worlds, I feel entrepreneurs and spouses act as a team in their personal as well as entrepreneurial lives.

APPENDIX – A

Ten books that I selected to look into for literature review

- 1) Swedberg, Richard, editor. *Entrepreneurship: a Social Science view*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000
- 2) Matthews, Jana. *Lessons from the edge: Survival skills for Starting and Growing a Company*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- 3) Libecap, Gary. *Issues in Entrepreneurship*. Jai Press, 2003.
- 4) Hisrich R. and Peters M. *Entrepreneurship: Starting, developing and managing a new enterprise*. Irwin: Richard D. Irwin, Inc, 1995.
- 5) Kent, Sexton & Vesper, editors. *Encyclopedia of Entrepreneurship*. Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1982.
- 6) Kent, Elvin, editor. *The environment for Entrepreneurship*. Lexington Books, 1984.
- 7) Dailey, Gene. *Secrets of Successful Entrepreneur: How to start and succeed at running your own business*. K&A Publications, 1993.
- 8) Mourdoukoutas, Panos. *Collective Entrepreneurship in a Globalizing Economy*. Quorum Books UK, 1999.
- 9) Collins, James and Lazier, William. *Beyond Entrepreneurship: Turning your business into an enduring great company*. Prentice Hall, 1992.
- 10) Naroola, Gurmeet. *The entrepreneurial Connection: East meets west in the Silicon Valley*. TiE, CA, USA 2001.

Note: I selected these books primarily for two reasons which I thought were appropriate to my research goal. 1) These books handled the subject of Entrepreneurship as a broad issue, rather than entrepreneurship in a specific field of business or in a particular geographical area. 2) Names of these books suggested to me that the authors may have looked at Entrepreneurship in various angles. The words in the title like Secrets, Social, Beyond, Collective, Issues, Encyclopedia, and Environment apparently influenced my selection of these books.

APPENDIX – B

Questionnaire for:

MIT Sloan School of Management
Spring, 2005

About this questionnaire:

- 1 to 6 are designed to give us an insight into you and your experiences.
- 7 to 9 are designed to provide us with vital approaches for a futuristic model.
- 10 is an opportunity to overcome any limitations of questions 1 through 9.

1. How would you describe yourself before marriage?
2. Did you have any role models during youth, what did you like about them?
3. How would you describe your response to -----'s entrepreneurial venture during early days?
4. How did you convert your willingness to contribute into a successful contribution towards business and family?
5. Describe your role towards home responsibilities, bringing up children and help your spouse during the busy and demanding days of business start-up?
6. During the initial days, did ----- discuss business with you? How did you contribute your views to help problem-solving?
7. Please share your views on the social responsibilities of spouses of entrepreneurs, especially when having increased ability to contribute to society?
8. Do you think spouses of entrepreneurs can help create jobs and wealth by helping new entrepreneurs? Especially women entrepreneurs? Please explain with reasoning.
9. What can be learned from your experience by spouses of future entrepreneurs?
10. Please share any additional information that you feel may further help us understand your role in the entrepreneurial journey.

*This questionnaire is part of the current research effort by Sanjay H. Inamdar
under the supervision of Dr. John Van Maanen at MIT Sloan*

© MIT Sloan

Bibliography

Canadian Federation of Independent Business: "The Work and Family Survey." October 2004.

Collins, James, and Lazier, William. *Beyond Entrepreneurship: Turning Your Business into an Enduring Great CompanyI*. Englewood Hills, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992.

Dailey, Eugene. *Secrets of a Successful Entrepreneur*. K&A Publications, 1993.

Dobson, James. *Life on the Edge*. W Publishing Group, 2000.

Einstein, Albert. In: Mayer, Jerry, and Holms, John P., editors. *Bite-Size Einstein*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, p. 43.

Matthews, Jana. *Lessons from the Edge: Survival Skills for Starting and Growing a Company*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Mourdoukoutas, Panos. *Collective Entrepreneurship in a Globalizing Economy*. Quorum Books, 1999.

Naroola, Gurmeet. *The Entrepreneurial Connection*. India: Tata-McGraw Hill, 2001.

Roberts, Edwards B., *Entrepreneurs in High Technology: Lessons from MIT and beyond*, draft, Sloan School of Management, MIT, Cambridge.

Roosevelt, Eleanor, Quotation. In: Foss, William O. *First Ladies Quotation Book: A Compendium of Provocative, Tender, Witty and Important Words from the Presidents' Wives*. New York: Barricade Books 1999. ISBN: 1569801304

Swedberg, Richard, editor. *Entrepreneurship: a Social Science View*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.